

government officials of the spelling of names collected. The names are also compared with those obtained from other sources (geologists of the Mines Department, surveyors of the Topographic Service, research workers of the Madagascar Institute of Scientific Research etc.); objections or divergencies are referred to an authority on the Malagasy language. Administrative names are transcribed in conformity with the official geographical code prepared jointly by the Ministry of the Interior and the statistical Service.

Nevertheless, some rules still remain to be formulated or clarified, and that will be the task of the future Malagasy Toponymy Commission, which will be guided by the rules recommended by the United Nations Group of Experts.⁵

The main points which will have to be clarified can be summed up as follows:

Preservation of original regional forms of names of places or small localities (large population centres will have to retain their present names);

⁵ Especially under Economic and Social Council resolution 814 (XXXI) of 27 April 1961, which was the subject of an official reply addressed to the United Nations Secretariat by the Malagasy Republic in late 1962.

Elimination of possibilities of confusion between identical names or similar spellings and correction, if necessary, of empirically devised names in use; thus, "Fenoarivo-Atsinanana" instead of "Fénérive" to distinguish it from other localities with the same name, and "Amboditetezana" instead of "Amboditont";

Standardization of the use of the initial article "I" in many place names and establishment of rules for the use of the locative prefix "An-", "Am-", "A-" or its derivative forms;

Clarification, if necessary, of the collective names or extent of major geographical entities;

Replacement of foreign by Malagasy names when there are no overriding reasons for retaining the former. Qualifications of orientation—for example, *Nord, Est, Sud, Ouest*—can easily be replaced by their Malagasy equivalents. "Midongy Atsimo" would thus replace "Modongy du Sud", "Fenoarivo Afoarivo" would replace "Fenoarivo Centre" and "Mananano Ambony" would replace "Haute Mananano";

Preparation of a comprehensive geographical dictionary or glossary.

TRANSLITERATION

Paper presented by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)¹

The objective of the International Organization for Standardization, as laid down in its constitution, is to promote the development of standards in the world with a view to facilitating international exchange of goods and services and developing co-operation in the sphere of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity.

The ISO members are national organizations (one for each country) representing their respective national viewpoints in the drawing up of recommendations for international standards. At present, fifty-six countries are full members of ISO. In addition, representatives from a number of developing countries which do not yet have regular standards organizations of their own are corresponding members of ISO.

The organization has specialist consultative or advisory liaison status with the United Nations family of organizations.

Responsive to demands from many quarters, ISO has been active for a number of years in deriving international systems for the transliteration of characters, or signs, from different alphabets into the Roman alphabet. After detailed study, which may involve years of research or discussion and consultation, draft proposals are prepared by a specialist technical committee. These are submitted to all ISO members as draft recommendations. Comments and suggestions for improvement or amendment received at different stages are subjected to expert examination within the technical committee, until eventually the draft recommendations are approved by ISO members. They are then submitted for acceptance to the ISO Council.

The ISO system, therefore, provides not only for detailed expert examination by specialists, but also for widespread international consultation in the member countries.

The first work on transliteration completed by ISO was recommendation R 9: "International system for the

transliteration of Cyrillic characters", the first edition of which was published in October 1955. This covers the transliteration into the Roman alphabet of Cyrillic scripts for the Slavonic languages, i.e. Russian, including Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, and Serbian. A second edition of the recommendation is now in preparation.

In 1961, ISO published its recommendation R. 233: "International system for the transliteration of Arabic characters." This deals with the transliteration into the Latin alphabet of characters used in languages based on the Arabic script, including, in addition to Arabic itself, languages such as Persian and Urdu.

ISO recommendation R 259, "Transliteration of Hebrew", was published in 1962 and deals likewise with the Hebrew script.

Work is already well advanced on an ISO recommendation on "Transliteration of Greek into Latin characters", which is expected to be ready for publication shortly.

The elaboration or adoption of differing systems for transliteration into the Latin alphabet would obviously create difficulties in international communication and would confuse the situation. In the interests of co-operation in international scientific and cultural activities and the exchange of information and ideas, a single standard system has to be agreed upon for transliteration. This system should have been agreed upon through a process of international consultation and should be valid, in all fields of application.

The ISO transliteration systems are not totally new: on the other hand, they have been elaborated with due regard to older and well-established transliterations. In preparing the ISO transliteration systems, international consultations and agreement have been the guiding principle. Furthermore, the ISO transliteration systems are intended for use in all fields; they are designed to be suitable

¹ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.73.

both for English-speaking countries and for other countries which use the Latin alphabet but which are not necessarily familiar with the English alphabetic traditions. It would seem very desirable, therefore, for any conference called to discuss transliteration for use in a particular field to take full account of the agreed transliteration systems already developed internationally by ISO.

This does not rule out the possibility that a national transliteration or transcription system may be used in a country internally and may exist side by side with the international transliteration system. For international

purposes, however, an international system is obviously preferable.

The organisation would welcome the opportunity for further improving the facilities for the preparation of internationally acceptable transliteration systems. For instance, a specialized institution in this field which is not already collaborating with ISO could easily be integrated in this work under mutually satisfactory arrangements. The organization possesses the necessary apparatus for international effort in preparing transliteration systems and its services are at the disposal of the Conference.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN BULGARIA

Paper presented by Bulgaria¹

In the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the theoretical and practical problems of transcription and orthography of geographical names have been tackled chiefly by two centres: the Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and the Central Administration of Geodesy and Cartography.

In the Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Academy of Sciences, thorough studies on Bulgaria's toponymy have been carried on for a number of years. Theoretical questions regarding the transcription of foreign geographical names have also been treated.

At the Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography, work has been conducted for many years on the toponymy of Bulgaria with a view to issuing accurate maps of the country and transcribing a large number of geographical names of other countries. Work on the transcription of foreign geographical names has been performed mainly for the needs of small-scale cartography, which uses the greatest number of transcribed geographical names.

By decision of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names was set up in 1964 under the Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography. It operates as an extra-departmental body and its decisions are binding on institutions and organizations. This is proof that the transcription of foreign geographical names for immediate practical purposes is viewed with great favour by the highest government authorities and the broadest cultural circles in our country.

The council attains its goals through its highly representative composition. It includes representatives of a number of academic institutions dealing with the Bulgarian language, Bulgarian history and Balkan studies, the Geographical Institute, the Sofia University, a number of ministries, Bulgarian cartographic organizations etc. It is established practice to bring in specialists in the different languages to comment on the council's papers.

The object of the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names is the standardization of orthography and the transcription of geographical names with a view to establishing their correct transcription and use in cartographic works, the Press, radio etc.

The council publishes lists of transcribed geographical names of foreign countries, specifying the transcription of the different geographical names in Bulgarian territory and their spelling on maps. The lists of transcribed

geographical names and the instructions issued by the council serve as bases for unifying the transcription and orthography of geographical names by all official bodies in Bulgaria.

Because the requirements of cartography for transcribed geographical names are the greatest, they determine the total number of transcribed geographical names. Thus, while meeting the requirements of cartography, we also meet all other needs (of the Press, radio, publishing houses etc.). The volume of work is also determined by a second, regional feature, which takes into consideration the substantially higher demands for the transcription of names in neighbouring countries with which, naturally, our cultural, economic and political contacts are considerably greater. For Bulgaria itself, the council has agreed to work on as many geographical names as are needed for the making of maps on a scale of 1:5,000; for the countries of the Balkan peninsula, on a scale of 1:500,000; for the European countries on a scale of 1:1,000,000; and for all other countries on a scale of 1:2,500,000.

In the transcription of geographical names, the council seeks to achieve an accurate phonetic rendering of foreign names with the means and possibilities of the Bulgarian language, while observing the basic rules of Bulgarian orthography and literary pronunciation. Moreover, we think that the endeavour to render the phonetics of the official language, spoken by the bulk of the population of the country concerned, is a correct principle, corresponding to the need for cultural exchanges between nations.

The establishment of an exact transcription of geographical names is impossible without steady and productive contact between nations, which can be expressed as follows:

Supply of original material for the toponymy of the countries;

Consistent exchange of experience (scientific symposiums, publications, studies etc.);

Reciprocal revision of the transcription of geographical names; and

Organization of a periodical publication to throw light on the theoretical problems connected with the transcription of geographical names.

In this respect we fully support the view of the Group of Experts² that regional conferences should be organized for exchanges of experience.

We think that a special examination of the problems of standardizing the transcription of geographical names is also necessary for purposes of cartography, which is the

¹ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.79.

² See annex, p. 151.